

ADOT, HOA to meet on Loop 202 Wednesday night

[By Doug Murphy | AFN](#)

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The on-again, off-again meeting between the Arizona Department of Transportation and homeowners of the Lakewood Homeowners Association is back on again.

Set for Wednesday, from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Pecos Park Community Center, the meeting is designed to update Lakewood residents on the proposed South Mountain Loop 202 freeway.

Freeway advisory team meets Thursday

The South Mountain Citizens Advisory Team meets June 26. On the agenda is a report on noise that the proposed South Mountain Loop 202 would generate, and how the Arizona Department of Transportation plans to reduce the impacts on Ahwatukee Foothills homes.

The meeting runs Wednesday from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at South Mountain Community College, 7050 S. 24th St., in the student union.

Also on the agenda is an item left over from last month on utility relocations required if the freeway is constructed along Pecos Road.

The citizens advisory team was formed by ADOT to help advise the state as it updates the original 1985 plan for the Loop 202 from Interstate 10 in Ahwatukee Foothills, west through South Mountain Park and then north to reconnect with I-10 near 55th Avenue.

The meeting is open to the public. For more information, call (602) 712-7006 or visit www.azdot.gov/valleyfreeways.

ADOT reconsidered attending after Rep. John McComish volunteered, along with Sen. John Huppenthal, to run the event.

A similar meeting several years ago at Kyrene de los Lagos Elementary School resulted in shouting and almost in blows as angry homeowners made their opposition to the freeway clear to harried ADOT staff.

"Unfortunately, over time, there has been an antagonism built up between ADOT and the homeowners association," said McComish.

Lakewood was created before ADOT planned to build the Loop 202 where Pecos Road now is. And despite trying to make way for the freeway, Lakewood will be heavily impacted by construction.

Wells that provide water for the development's signature lakes will need to be moved, and, at most, a couple dozen homes torn down. That has HOA officials worried about impacts to the association's budget.

While the meeting is open to the public, McComish stressed that it was set up specifically for Lakewood residents.

"The first priority for questions is the Lakewood HOA people because it's their meeting," said McComish.

He's hoping that people will be polite and stick to the topic by asking questions and not taking up time giving speeches.

The freeway has been controversial almost from the beginning. In 1985 it was approved, but funding soon ran low and it was put on the back burner. However, as Ahwatukee grew, from 2,172 people in 1980 to 62,519 in 1995, ADOT considered several options including allowing a toll road south of Pecos Road and allowing the city of Phoenix to build Pecos Road as a parkway around South Mountain.

In 2001 ADOT began a new study to update the old plan and

to take into account rapid growth in Ahwatukee Foothills and
-- *Doug Murphy* on the west side in Laveen.

Meanwhile the estimated cost has grown from \$900 million to \$1.7 billion with a new update expected shortly.

At the same time, the number of homes in Ahwatukee Foothills that will need to be demolished has grown from 255 to 317 as planners went from the original 6-lane concept in 1985 to a 10-lane plan.

Currently the draft environmental impact statement is hung up as the federal highway administration and ADOT meet with Gila River Indian Community leaders on how to deal with major cuts through ridges in South Mountain Park that the tribe considers sacred.

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